

The Swimming Party Fad

THE ST. LOUIS
REPUBLIC
MAGAZINE



WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY REPUBLIC.

It is to swim these sultry days of mid-summer.

Look at that crowd of damp-headed young people in the forward end of the street car.

Their "collars" are not sewed on with black thread, which, bit of evidence that dear Mississippi boy, Tom Sawyer, by name, found so damaging.

And you know they have not "pumped on their head," since most of them are children of a larger growth.

No; that state of stringiness and shining wetness on the part of the girls' pompadours; and that very obvious condition of towliness which reveals itself when the youths take off their hats and let the breeze blow through their hair - is due unmistakably to an evening in the swimming pool.

And they don't care who knows it. For everybody who does is likely to envy them with a vast and exceeding envy just as long as the weather stays hot.

Hear piquante Julia Cabanne tell how fast she is learning to dive! Verily, there is almost nothing which this hearty and athletic girl cannot do in the water. She floats and treads water and jumps off a spring-board and generally enjoys herself as a mermaid. Her brown locks are glistening with aqua pura, but little she cares! I'm told it is only the tussy girls who object to letting their hair get wet, any way.

A handkerchief soaked in water for a few moments, too; so there is really little gained by wearing one. And those frights of oil-akia caps are not to be considered for a moment. The real girl swimmer of the summer does up her locks on the top of her head, and gives no more thought to them until the end of the evening.

Do you see that stout woman coming out of the Natatorium, carrying a covered basket with long handles? Now, covered baskets are not ordinarily the vogue so far as fashionable women are concerned. Don't you know what's in it? Why, her wet bathing suit.

She came down on this particular morning to take her first plunge, and the swimming master won't let her leave her suit, because it isn't marked plainly with her name. So she has borrowed a basket and now carries

it home, all wet and dripping. On Saturday she will come with a neat little basket labeled in indelible ink and sewn in the neckband of her flannel blouse. No more basket carrying for her.

You can rent suits at the natatorium, but they are usually made of that durable but distressingly unbecoming material known as "ticking." I defy even Leigh Whittemore or Amy Holland to look pretty in a "ticking" costume.

One can have all sorts of fun in the pool on a Wednesday. It is then that the women go. An early hour finds the big tank full of bathers; and the platform round it lined with admiring female friends, who are afraid of rheumatism or getting their hair wet, or of just trying to learn to swim.

Some of the young girls are regular fishes in their prowess. Miss Carr and Julia Wilson swim well. They disport in the regulation dark blue flannel. Miss Wilson's costume has fetching white silk anchors embroidered on it; and she is not afraid to get it wet at home before going to the lake-side for the summer.

You see ever so many girls wearing queer shabby old suits at these morning baths. They own better ones, but are saving them for the seashore, where one must be as dress-or, rather, undress-parade.

I like to watch Miss Sally Barnes in the water. She is so strong and so shapely, as well; and she swims out fearfully. Then her hair gets touched with water round the neck, and, like all naturally curly locks, just rolls itself up in fetching little tendrils.

She wears a black suit with white collar, while the sailor knot and belt are of pink.

That fascinating person with the snow-white hair and the features of Miss Laidley. She doesn't swim much, you see just paddles about and enjoys herself. You always find a congenial group about her on swimming days. She has brought down the Dorchester girls with her and they are going to take turns swinging from the ropes out over the pool.

Go to the natatoriums some time at night. That is, if you are fortunate enough to be invited to a swimming party projected by a jolly lot of young people. It's called the gay diversion of the summer.

BERNIE LAMER.